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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REPORT: INDIAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF
POTUS REMARKS IN TURKEY

SUMMARY: President Barack Obama's address to the Turkish Parliament received wide media coverage in India. His message of goodwill toward Islam was highlighted in news reports in leading newspapers, television bulletins and internet portals, and most significantly in all leading Urdu newspapers of the country. Leading Urdu dailies, read by millions of Muslims, highlighted the President's remarks -- "The United States is not, and will never be, at war with Islam." In their headlines, pro-Islamic Urdu newspapers also gave prominence to the President's comments that America's relationship with the Muslim world "cannot, and will not, just be based upon opposition to terrorism," and that the U.S. seeks a "broader engagement based on mutual interest and mutual respect." Overall, the reporting seen so far is straightforward and objective. No editorial commentary has yet appeared. END SUMMARY.

-- QNO WAR WITH ISLAM: OBAMA

¶1. Following is the full text of a Press Trust of India (PTI) wire story that appeared in several leading English language dailies, including THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THE HINDU, THE ASIAN AGE and DECCAN HERALD:

¶2. (Begin text) DUBAI: Reaching out to the Muslim world, President Barack Obama on Monday said the U.S. "is not and will never be at war with Islam" as he sought to rope in close ally Turkey in the critical fight against terrorism. Addressing a packed Turkish Parliament, Mr. Obama said: "Let me say this as clearly as I can. The

United States is not and never will be at war with Islam. In fact, our partnership with the Muslim world is critical ... in rolling back a fringe ideology that people of all faiths reject, he said during his first state visit to a Muslim nation after becoming U.S. President in January.

¶ 13. Describing Turkey as a key ally in many areas including the fight against terrorism, he said there should be greater bond between Americans and Muslims. Mr. Obama's visit is being closely watched by an Islamic world that harbored deep distrust of his predecessor, George W Bush. Mr. Obama clearly sought to draw a distinction between Islam and terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda saying the latter did not represent the vast majority of Muslims. Q America's relationship with the Muslim world cannot and will not be based on opposition to Al-Qaeda, he said, adding that the U.S. sought broad engagement based upon Q mutual interests and mutual respect. Q Mr. Obama also warned that Iran had to make a choice between having a nuclear weapon and building a better future for its people. (End text)

-- QUS IS NOT AT WAR WITH ISLAM, SAYS OBAMA

¶ 14. Following is an excerpt from an AFP wire story that appeared in India's leading English newspaper THE TIMES OF INDIA:

¶ 15. (Begin excerpt) ANKARA: US President Barack Obama on
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Monday seized upon his first symbolism-laced visit to the Muslim world as US president to declare that the United States is not and never will be at war with Islam. From the well of the Turkish parliament, Obama warned "you cannot put out fire with flames," arguing that brute force alone could not thwart extremism as he sent a flurry of coded messages throughout the Middle East.

¶ 16. Obama drew on his own biography as the son of a believer as he sought to forge new trust with the Islamic world, and portrayed Turkey as an example of a thriving Muslim nation where faith and democracy could thrive together. The president said US ties with the Muslim world could not be simply defined by opposition to terrorism, decades into a US struggle with extremism that was sharpened by the September 11 attacks in 2001.

¶ 17. "The United States has been enriched by Muslim Americans. Many other Americans have Muslims in their family, or have lived in a Muslim-majority country -- I know, because I am one of them." Obama also sent a fresh olive branch to Iran, backed dialogue between Israel and Syria and promised a new initiative within months to improve healthcare, education, and trade with the Islamic world.

¶ 18. He also attempted to ease bilateral relations with Turkey that were bruised by former president George W. Bush's decision to invade Iraq, and portrayed his hosts as a pivotal player in the troubled region. "The United States is not and never will be at war with Islam," Obama told ranks of seated Turkish members of parliament, in a speech occasionally punctuated by applause.

¶ 19. "We will listen carefully, bridge misunderstanding... We will be respectful, even when we do not agree," said Obama, promising to unveil specific programs on trade, education and health care in the Muslim world. In his latest attempt to frame his offer of dialogue with Iran, Obama warned that the country he pointedly referred to as "the Islamic Republic" must choose between its nuclear drive or an embrace by the West. "Now, Iran's leaders must choose whether they will try to build a weapon or build a better future for their people."

¶10. Obama had said during his election campaign he would give an important speech to a major Islamic forum within his first 100 days in office. Aides said the Turkey trip did not mark the expected address, but would not say when or where it might appear. Obama also renewed US support for a two-state solution in the Middle East. "That is a goal that the parties agreed to in the roadmap and at Annapolis. And that is a goal that I will actively pursue as president," he said. Obama's remarks came after Israel's new Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said last week the 2007 Annapolis document did not bind Israel though he did accept the roadmap as the basis for progress. (End excerpt)

-- TV COVERAGE OF POTUSQS SPEECH

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¶11. Leading English news channel CNN-IBN carried clips of the President, saying the U.S. is not at war with Islam and that the relationship with the Muslim world will not just be based on the U.S. position on terrorism. Major TV new channels also carried wire stories on their websites highlighting the PresidentQs remarks that the US is not and never will be at war with Islam.

-- URDU PRESS COVERAGE

¶12. Most significantly, the PresidentQs speech played out positively in IndiaQs Urdu language press. While the reports were objective wire stories, appreciation was visible in the some of the headlines and blurbs. The countryQs most influential Urdu daily, SIASAT, published from Hyderabad in South India, said in a headline -- QU.S To Build Broader Relations with Muslim World -- ObamaQs Message of Peace to Iran.

¶13. The lead headline in MUNSIF, another leading Urdu daily from Hyderabad, said: QBarack Hussein Obama Gives Message to Muslim World; Offers Pleasant Relationship Based on Mutual Respect.Q Similar positive headlines appeared in lead stories in ETEMAAD and RASHTRIYA SAHARA Urdu dailies. Other mass-circulating language newspapers of the country, including NAVBHARAT TIMES, AMAR UJALA, VEER ARJUN and DAINIK BHASKAR (Hindi dailies) and PRAJAVANI (Kannada daily) also prominently carried news reports on the PresidentQs speech.

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